

# TRAVEL

## Hamburger & SHIPS

*Early Beatles, the Reeperbahn and ah, our favourite meat roll... this city is a riot for a short break*

**I**CH bin ein Hamburger. I am a Hamburger. No, not one of those advertising gimmick guys, dressed up in bun, burger, lettuce and tomato padding who tries to get you to use his fast-food outlet. No, I am a resident of Hamburg, at

BY JIM MURTY

least for a couple of days, where I will learn all about the original Hamburger, the rundstück warm, the best place to eat them and the Germans who are quite happy sharing their names with the world's most famous fast food. And I will also learn first-hand how to detect a Hamburger if I ever suspect one might be approaching me back home.

But more of that later. You want me to show you Hamburg's most famous neighbourhood, the raucous, racy, party portside district of St Pauli and its main artery, the Reeperbahn? Right? Or rather you want

Stefanie Hempel to show you. Trust me, you really do.

Stefanie is something of an institution in St Pauli (pronounced Sankt Powlee), with her

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**INSIDE: VSDGHS DGHSDGHE • TSDGHS DGHSDG**



# Hipsters lounge in the beach bar on the docks

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Beatles Tour and ukelele. What Stefanie doesn't know about Der Fab Four and particularly their teenage days in Hamburg between 1960 and 1962 isn't worth knowing. Stefanie takes our 25-strong party around the landmarks and clubs which made men and musicians of The Beatles and belts out their songs, both on the street and in the St Pauli museum where she plays a six-song set.

Whatever else you do on the Reeperbahn, and The Beatles saw plenty of that including the mud wrestling which particularly intrigued a 17-year-old George Harrison, you'll not spend a better three hours in St Pauli than on Stefanie's Beatles tour.

Taking you back then to 1960 and The Beatles boarded a ship with the Mersey invasion, St Pauli's promoters keen to cash in on the American sailors' huge appetite for rock'n'roll and save on the outlay of having to pay out for London bands.

The Beatles were bad at the start, junkyard bad, and had only an hour set when Hamburg clubs required four, the bars staying open through the morning.

Stefanie shows us the places where The Beatles lived (or more accurately existed).

IT INCLUDES the freezing storage room next to the cinema where their first promoter put them. She also shows us a photo of an angelic Paul wrapped in a Union Jack to keep warm and John smoking a cigarette for the same reason.

Next up is the famed Hotel Pacific where they stayed on their last engagement in Hamburg, when they played the Star Club.

By this point The Beatles had honed their act into something that would in a matter of months become Beatlemania. You can still book their room at The Pacific to this day to stay.

The multi-millionaire Paul could, of course, choose his pick of fancy hotels in Hamburg now such as the sumptuous

Reichshof Hotel in the heart of the city opposite the Hamburg Central Station (Hbf) and only a typically efficient train journey to St Pauli.

Built in 1910 as the 'Hamburger Traditional Hotel', like the rest of Hamburg which took a huge hit in the Second World War due to its industrial importance to the Nazi effort, it has risen from the ashes of those days.

The Reichshof was completely renovated in 2015 and is now part of the Curio Collection of Hilton Hotels which is a hallmark of quality. It features Art Deco design themes with the elegant pink light fixtures and marble walls and rich leather in the lobby setting the mood of luxury.

This being Germany too, service and comfort are to the fore – we were given an upgrade to a deluxe room. And this being Germany too breakfast included every possible cut of meat and every cheese known to animal.

But, of course, there is one meaty dish which will always be King in Hamburg, the other truly global brand made in Hamburg.

## WHY GERMAN TRAINS ALWAYS RUN ON TIME

They think small in Hamburg. How else would they fit so many iconic railway journeys under the one roof: Germany, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, America.

Me. I'm waiting in a station in the Alps, well obviously not the actual mountains, but this is certainly how the Lilliputians would have built them. And it is how twins Frederik and Gerrit Braun and their nightclub owner partner Stephan Hertz conceived them. This is the Miniatur Wunderland which was opened in 2001 in Kehrwieder in the historic Speicherstadt or Warehouse district of Hamburg, and I'm playing with the biggest model train set in the world, pressing all kinds of buttons to switch lights on and off. So that's 1,040 trains over 15,400m (or a mile) of track, with 263,000 figures and the exhibits taking up around a quarter of the 73,000sqft of floorspace.

Over nine sections, the project is not finished yet and they aim to add on France and England/Scotland.

Ireland? A few years off yet but any replica of our DART network would have to come with a loudspeaker announcing cancelled and late trains, the trains moving only intermittently while the 6pm back to Greystones, Co. Wicklow would have all the passengers crammed into the carriages like sardines.

Hoot, hoot!!



It is no exaggeration to say that modern-day America was built on the immigrant German staple, the pork sandwich, the rundstuck warm, and it is still the perfect go-to food to refuel, particularly after

a trawl around St Pauli.

Dulf's on Karolinenstrasse has been recommended to me and it doesn't let you down, although I might have, the juice from my packed Farmer's Burger drizzling

down my front. I might not have kept dignity intact but I did juicy medium done hamburger and its egg, coleslaw and bacon filling.

You can soak it all up with beer though I passed on the American lite stuff. I wanted an authentic Pilsener in a Hamburger's bar rather than a Hamburger bar.

Local brew Astra, with its anchor label is your only man and well priced at under a fiver a pint, and the scruffy Kitty Kat bar around the corner in Feldstrasse is a great

pit stop.

You'll see nautical themes all around as if you needed any reminder that this is a city built on its shipping. So when in Hamburg...

I jump on a ship on an hour-long trip around the port through Hamburg's renovated and historic Warehouse district and take in the views of the party ships and concert halls across the water where our favourite musicals are playing.

A ship passes by bedecked in Lion King branding while I half expect Mary Poppins to fly by on her way to the splendid Elbphilharmonie, or Elbphi to the locals, amphitheatre.

There you'll find higher culture enjoyed by the great and the good, among them Trump, Merkel, May and Putin who all tapped feet together when the G20 summit was held in Hamburg last year.

But it is not all stuffed shirts

and opera glasses, the Elbphi is for all the Hamburgers and the reserves queue is part of the daily ritual of city life.

Even if you don't have time to take in a performance at The Elbphi it is still well worth a visit to the observation deck for spectacular views of the waterfront and it is here that our guide Jorn tells us how to spot a Hamburger on your travels.

The story goes that a poor water-carrier back in the day ran

## TRAVELFACTS

### HOW TO GET THERE

Jim flew to Hamburg with Aer Lingus from €92 round trip. Visit [www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com).

### WHERE TO STAY

The Reichshof Hamburg Hotel for two nights for the sample dates of December 1-3 for a twin large room from €289. Visit [www.reichshof-hotel-hamburg.de](http://www.reichshof-hotel-hamburg.de).

### WHAT TO DO

Miniatur Wunderland ([www.miniatur-wunderland.com](http://www.miniatur-wunderland.com)). Hempel's Beatles-Tour ([www.hempels-musictour.de](http://www.hempels-musictour.de)). Elbphilharmonie ([www.elbphilharmonie.de](http://www.elbphilharmonie.de)). StrandPauli ([www.strandpauli.de](http://www.strandpauli.de)). Dulf's Burger ([www.dulfs-burger.de](http://www.dulfs-burger.de)).

a gauntlet of abuse from the local children as he went about his daily chores on account of his wife's philandering.

They'd call out Hummel, Hummel (his wife's name which for some unknown reason means Bumblebee). And so when Hamburgers meet in a foreign setting they play out the scene by greeting their colleagues with 'Hummel, Hummel' to which they are met with the response Mors, Mors and a turn of the bum.

JUST like the old water-carrier is supposed to have done in days of yore. I spot a statue of him as we take our evening amble along the portside and take the obligatory selfie, you can also buy little statues of him in any of the souvenir shops which makes a great memento of your Hamburg trip.

Our last evening we also take on water... who are we kidding, we take on beer in a hip beach bar on the quayside.

Come again! Yes, the Hamburgers have developed the area next to their Fishmarket as a beachfront and this is where the young hipsters (and us) go to recline in deckchairs and drink cocktails, after our hamburgers of course. It's great value too, two burgers and chips, three beers and a Pina Colada at the St Pauli Beach Club costing south of €50.

Some will now go on into the Reeperbahn and maybe refuel in the bustling Fishmarket in the early and middle hours of the morning. But as the steel of the boats on the water glisten against the twilight I feel stuck to the spot.

Me, I'm all about the Hamburgers and the ships!



## Holiday snaps

BY JIM MURTY

## I'm delighted to toast Turkey on 95th birthday...



MUTLU 95th yıldönümü Türkiye'ye mi... and here's to the next 95.

Alas, I could not take up the kind invitation of His Excellency, Mr Leven Murat Burhan, the Turkish Ambassador to Ireland to attend the reception for the 95th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey this week as Judy Murray was trying to teach me tennis in Portugal – more later!

This week though was all about Turkey.

Of course, Turkey, while a new Republic, is one of the world's oldest countries dating back to 900AD.

And it made a huge mark on history and civilisation when the Ottoman Empire was in its pomp.

I fell in love with Turkey and the Turks from the moment I set foot in this enchanting and exotic country.

In fact even before, having been

OF course while we had the ski boots on last week for our Seven-day Special season opener there was a lot going on in winter sun. And new routes. Vancouver has become a bit of a Holy Grail for our young people over recent years and WOW air is making it easier to get there, and for us parents to get out there and check on them. The Icelandic low-fares airline will have six flights a week to the West Coast Canadian city with a stop-off in Reykjavik with fares from €129.99 commencing on June 6, 2019. Visit [www.vowair.ie](http://www.vowair.ie).

THERE'S no secret why the Canaries are so popular – guaranteed sun. Sunway offers seven nights' half-board from €899pps at the four-star Aqua Suites Hotel, departing November 24. Flights included. Visit [www.sunway.ie](http://www.sunway.ie) (01) 231 1888.

HIT the seas... seven nights full-board Dubai, Abu Dhabi & Sir Bani Yas cruise from €659pps (interior cabin). Travel December 11, other dates too. Visit [GoHop.ie](http://GoHop.ie) (01) 2412389.

mistaken for a Turk (I'm Black Irish) on the flight over when an air steward started a conversation with me in Turkish.

A day or so in to our holiday in Bodrum and a market trader picked up our eight-year-old son and heir Ally and twirled him around on account of his name being similar to the common Turkish name Ali.

By the end of the holiday I felt one of them and even came second in a talent contest... to the belly dancer.

It seems Scots/Irish dancing is popular there too.

Turkey has thankfully recovered from the terrorist atrocities in Istanbul and Irish holidaymakers are returning in numbers.

We found a sample week with Abbey Travel at the three-star Hotel Centro Bodrum which is only 800 metres from the beach on Bardakci Bay from €461pp, flying with the excellent Turkish Airlines.

Call (01) 8047100 Visit [www.abbeytravel.ie](http://www.abbeytravel.ie).

AND Aer Lingus too has been expanding its routes with sunworshippers in Cork getting a taste for travelling from their own doorstep to Lisbon with the inaugural flight there taking off last week. Aer Lingus is also treating Corkonians to new routes to Dubrovnik and Nice for summer next year.

WITH the clocks going back, being away et al, I'm all over the place with the seasons. I rely on Aer Lingus to keep me right. It has Christmas markets to Europe's most festive cities from €29.99. Visit [www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)

KEEP volleying! Just back from The Magnolia Hotel in Denis O'Brienland, Quinta do Lago in the Algarve where I was put through my paces on the tennis court by none other than Judy Murray. I'll give you a fuller account in the next few weeks of what's on offer there and at sports dreamworld The Campus. Two nights, Friday and Saturday from €216pps. Visit [www.magnoliahotel.com](http://www.magnoliahotel.com), Ryanair round trip from €114.